Setting the record straight on Granite Bay Community Plan

Kurt Uhler, Placer County Supervisor



In August of 2008, the Placer County Board of Supervisors directed Planning Department staff to initiate a review of the 20 year-old Granite Bay Community Plan to see if any modifications to planning goals, policies or assumptions, as well as land-use designations were warranted.

According to the planning director, the state's Office of Planning and Research highly recommends that general/community plans be reviewed and updated every 10 to 15 years to assure the assumptions in the document are still valid. The GBCP is 20 years old and contains growth assumptions only through the year 2000. Accordingly, it is appropriate for the county to re-Iook at these assumptions to determine whether or not changes are needed.

The review process was initiated in January, when a letter was sent to every property owner in the GBCP area, inviting them to submit their comments on policy and land-use modification requests, as well as requests for criteria by which change requests should be evaluated. The letter invited members of the community to a meeting that was held on Feb. 11 with nearly 400 people in attendance.

I would like to set the record straight on several issues that were raised at the community meeting and continue to be circulated by some.

Kirk Uhler

The first thing I would like everyone to know is that though the county has opened the plan up for review and suggestions by property owners, there are no land-use changes currently being proposed. Nor are there any development proposals of which I am aware that have not already been made known to the community at our Municipal Advisory Council meetings. In short, no changes are being recommended by the county at this time, and if there are any, they will not be until the review period is over June 30.

Another common mis-statement is that this update will cost between \$300,000 and \$500,000 to complete. This is inaccurate. The Planning Department's estimates are that the review process will cost less than \$50,000 this fiscal year, and the total anticipated cost is only between \$50,000 and \$150,000, depending on the amount of requests/recommendations received (this includes all staff time spent working on the update). The higher number was staff's estimated budget to complete all work on all community plan updates that staff is working on this year, not just the GBCP. As community plan updates are necessary, there are several other updates going on at the same time in Placer County.

The suggestion by some that this should be done by committee also brings me great concern. This is OUR plan, and I believe everyone in the community should have equal opportunity to review the plan and make suggestions. This is why this review is open to any property owner, not just a select few with their own special interests.

Once any actual updates are suggested, I also believe everyone who wants a say on them should have an equal opportunity for that as well.

Another concern I've heard is that I want to change the 300-foot set-back policy on the south side of Douglas Boulevard. Though I have never liked this policy, believing it to be an unwarranted "taking" by government, and made it a key issue in my first successful campaign for the Board of Supervisors back in 1992, I have no interest in suggesting any changes to that policy as a part of this process. Most of the land affected by the policy has either been developed or has been acquired as permanent open space, and I see no need to change it now.

People have asked, "Why not just keep this plan and if changes are needed, do them one-by-one?" First, as discussed above, the county needs to update the plan - we need to receive input and then review and decide what, if any, policy or land use changes make sense. Second, doing piecemeal changes to a community plan isn't planning. It is reacting. Piecemeal development leads to higher traffic impacts, less certainty for property owners and diminishes the value of having a community plan.

I've been accused of having an agenda to cover Douglas Boulevard with strip commercial centers. I do not support increasing the allowable square footage of commercial property beyond what is in the Plan today. I do, however, support incorporating policies that encourage the redevelopment and updating of existing commercial uses, similar to what we saw when the Quarry Ponds Center replaced the old boat retail and storage facility.

Finally, when the 1975 Loomis Basin General Plan was adopted, it established a build-out population for the area now covered by the GBCP of 29,000. When the current Community Plan was adopted in 1989, it preserved the build-out population of 29,000. I don't believe either of those plans adequately anticipated the affect that development in neighboring jurisdictions (Roseville, Rocklin, Folsom and El Dorado County) would have on our infrastructure, particularly our road capacity. Accordingly, I have recommended to our planning staff that this plan update included a reduction in the build-out population of 20 percent, from 29,000 down to 23,000.

In summary, right now there are no changes being proposed to the Community Plan, only a review. The review is open to any Granite Bay property owner to make policy change recommendations or land use change recommendations (for their own land).

I would be happy to comment or share my thoughts on any policy or land use changes you may be interested in. Once the submission period is over (June 30, 2009), the Planning Department will present the requests received. Everyone who would like to comment on the requests will be given that opportunity. As your County Supervisor, and a resident of this community for nearly 40 years who has watched with great pride as we have developed into one of the finest communities in the Sacramento region, that is my commitment to you.

Keywords

Kurt Uhler, Granite Bay MAC

Post a Comment

Not registered? Click here

E-mail this

Print this